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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to describe and better understand the experiences of first- and second-year college students (18-21 years old) attending a university catering to a rural population in a mid-Eastern state. A 31-question survey addressed 6 areas of development: building friendships, community, exclusive relationships, self management, support, and academic behavior, and was administered during the first week of classes in the first semester and during the last week of classes before final exams to 101 first- and second-year education majors to track changes in development. Respondents lived within a 60-mile radius of the university or in residence halls. Analysis found a significant correlation between friends and classmates for second-year students, but not for first-year students, a finding which suggested that first-year students did not consider academic classmates as "friends." Alcohol consumption was reported for every age group, indicating significant alcohol use during the first week of college and continuing throughout college. There was a high correlation between close friends and residence hall friends for both first- and second-year students, although this was not the case when analyzing friendships formed with academic classmates. (Contains 30 references.)(JLS)

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The Role of Human Development and Student Growth Among First and Second Year College Students

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Abstract

Sottile's (1996) qualitative research of first year female college students revealed that Chickering's theory does capture many of the experiences of college females. In Sottile's (1996) analysis of the experiences of female college students, seven themes were generated: "Going Out In College," "Meeting People In College," "Residence Hall As Community," "The Impact Of College Friends," "On Your Own: The Responsibility Of Being Mature," "Learning To Be Independent" and "Academic Pressures Of College." These themes correspond well with Chickering's first three vectors of student development. The research below extends the above cited research to include both male and female, first and second year college students.

The purpose of this research was to describe and to better understand the experiences of first and second year college students (18-21 years old) attending a university in a Mid-Eastern state. A novel survey was created to determine the activities of college students. The survey contained six areas of development which related to building friendships, community, exclusive relationships, self management, support, and academic behavior. The survey was administered during the first week of classes in the first semester and during the last week of classes before final exams to track changes in development. One hundred and one surveys were completed by first and second year education majors during the first week of classes and 81 surveys during the last week of classes. The gender breakdown was about 65% female and 35% male students. Nine surveys during the first round and 15 surveys during the second round were not analyzed because they did not fit the category of being traditional first or second year college student. Approximately 70% of the surveys returned were traditional first year college students.

In analyzing the data set, significant correlations were found. There was a correlation between friends and classmates pertaining to second year students but such a correlation did not exist regarding the first year college student population. This strongly suggested that first year students did not consider their academic classmates as friends; rather, they tended to see their residence hall peers as "friends." This also indicated that by the second year of college, academic classmates may become friends. Alcohol consumption was present for every age group, which indicated that alcohol use was significant during the first week of college and continued throughout college. For both first and second year college students, as hours spent with friends increased, so did alcohol consumption. This was also true when analyzing similarities between residence hall friends; as more time was spent with this peer group, alcohol consumption increased. There was a significant relationship between close friends and residence hall friends for first year students. Even more interestingly, there was also an extremely high correlation between close friends and residence hall friends for second year students. This indicated that residence hall friends became close friends. This was not the case when analyzing academic classmates as related to forming friendships. Social interactions, with an emphasis on building a support network of friends, seemed to be related to college development.

Implications are discussed regarding the benefits to overall student development of forming social networks through college activities. Solid social networks should be fostered in a student's social activities, and be established in a student's academic environment. Social development and peer support groups should be part of the instructional design of all first year classes. Small group interactions should be part of the instructional format of all classes to aid student development and initiate academic social networks. It is also important to note that the vast majority of the participants regularly engaged in underage drinking. Intervention programs should be established which go beyond just trying to stop students from using alcohol. Programs should be developed that educate students about appropriate alcohol use and the dangers involved when alcohol is used inappropriately. The establishment of an identity is related to the psychosocial process of forming social networks throughout a person's life activities. College is still predominantly a social process during the second year of college. It is an intimacy of social networks.

Literature Review

This quantitative study of male and female, first- and second- year college students attempts to extend conventional theories of human development as related to student development. Existing theories claim to represent and capture the experiences of both female and male undergraduate college students (Erikson, 1968; Chickering and Reisser, 1993; Kohlberg, 1971). These theories have been criticized in recent years for misrepresenting female student experiences and development (Gilligan, 1977; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986). "If and when scientists turn to the study of women, they typically look for ways in which women conform to or diverge from patterns found in the study of men" (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 6). This study will identify the characteristics involved in the experiences of first- and second-year college students, and will determine how these characteristics relate to development in education. This study will also attempt to elucidate differences among the participants in the study that are related to factors such as years in school, community, social networks, and independence, in an effort to have a greater awareness of the actual experiences and developmental processes of all college students.

The theorists discussed in this review of pertinent literature include Erikson, Chickering, Perry, Kohlberg, Gilligan, and Belenky et al. These authors have been divided into two forms of student development theories: traditional student development and female college student development. The theories designed by Erikson, Chickering, Perry and Kohlberg are traditional; their design does not fully capture the experiences of college women. The theories or models presented by Gilligan and Belenky et al, on the other hand, are theoretically based upon the experiences of college women.

In examining the experiences of young adult college students, many theorists have relied on the work of Erik Erikson (1950, 1968, 1980). Erikson defined "Identity versus Identity Diffusion" as a stage of late adolescent development (Erikson, 1959). Since the majority of college students fall within this age range, this psychosocial stage is pertinent to this population. Erikson (1968) theorized that the "Identity Diffusion" stage occurs due to the "epigenetic principle," which

states that "anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole" (p. 92). Basically, development occurs due to biological, social, and age-related influences interacting upon the individual. The questioning of identity leads either to a secure sense of self or to an ambiguous, diffuse understanding of self. In each of Erikson's stages, a developmental crisis must be resolved in order to grow. If no resolution occurs at this stage, psychosocial development could be unhealthy; the young adult may temporarily over identify, to the point of apparent complete identity loss (Erikson, 1959; Josselson, 1987).

Arthur Chickering, a leader in student development research, proposed seven major areas of development. Chickering labeled these areas vectors of development "because each seems to have direction and magnitude--even though the direction may be expressed more appropriately by a spiral or by steps than by a straight line" (Chickering, 1969, p. 8). According to Chickering, the initial concerns of college students involve coping with academic material, meeting people, and taking care of daily tasks (vector 1). Managing emotions such as anxiety and anger is part of vector 2. Students who are able to free themselves from parental and peer reassurance, affection, or approval are developing autonomy (vector 3). The development of mature interpersonal relationships is a key aspect of vector 4. Establishing identity (vector 5) depends on the first four vectors; it also fosters change in the final two vectors of student development. Chickering believed that the establishment of identity in college students involves coming to terms with physical appearance and sexuality. A student at vector 5 is able to recognize and tolerate differences and appreciate their existence in intimate relationships. The main goals of students at vector 6 (developing purpose) are to formulate plans and priorities and to integrate avocational interests with vocational plans. The development of integrity (vector 7) for a college student involves a shift from a dualistic view of rules to a more relativistic position. Students begin to affirm their own value system and act in accordance with them; integrity exists in relationship between the students' behavior and beliefs.

Perry (1970) suggested that development progressed from a dualistic view to a more

complex or pluralistic one, in which knowledge and truth can no longer be equated. Perry labeled the different modes of thinking "positions", because each identifies a location of cognitive development. During positions 1-3, "Dualism Modified," students view truth as right or wrong; they have difficulty understanding conflicting points of view and little confidence in asserting personal opinions. A shift in development during the next three positions is labeled "Relativism Discovered." College students at this level believe everyone has a right to his or her own opinion; opinions are not objectively challenged because all views are seen as "right." During positions 7-9 (Commitment in Relativism Developed"), college students develop identities consistent with personal beliefs. Diverse views are balanced against personally defined value systems.

Kohlberg (1971, 1975, 1984) studied student development in terms of moral judgment. Though Kohlberg did not specifically develop his theory for college students, it has been applied to student development. At level two, "Conventional Moral Reasoning," college students look to peers or to family for approval, regardless of the perceived consequences. First year students are more likely to evaluate intent rather than action. Students at the "Postconventional Moral Reasoning" level have an abstract thought process and are capable of understanding the consequences of behavior as related to the degree of personal responsibility.

These theorists, mentioned in the context of traditional development, relied on the use of male experiences to establish "norms" (Belenky et al, 1986). It is important to note that Erikson (1959) and Chickering (1969) examined the experiences of men and women, but misrepresented the experiences of women. Prominent theorists in the area of female development (e.g. Gilligan and Belenky et al) have challenged the findings articulated by traditional, male-oriented theorists whose norms were generalized to the experiences of women.

For example, Erikson (1968) believed young women (e.g. college age females) establish identities through men.

> Young women often ask whether they can 'have an identity' before they know whom they will marry and for whom they will make a home. Granted that something in the young woman's identity must keep itself open for the peculiarities of the man to be joined and of the children to be brought up, I think that much of a woman's identity is already defined in the kind of attractiveness and in the selective nature of her search for the man (or men) by whom she wishes to be sought. This,

> of course, is only the psychosexual aspect of her identity, and she may go far in postponing its closure while training herself as a worker and a citizen while developing as a person within the role possibilities of her time (Erikson, 1968, p. 283).

Chickering's work on identity development of college students has also been challenged in terms of its validity as related to female college experiences and identity development. Hood, Riahinejad, and White (1986) questioned Chickering's belief that identity development occurs during the first year of college. They suggested that the "college environment may be promoting the development of identity in men to a greater extent than in women. The mixed messages women receive in college regarding career patterns, sex roles, and societal attitudes may cause women to develop identity at a slower rate" (Hood, Riahinejad, and White, 1986, p. 113). Straub and Rodgers (1986) found similar conclusions: "evidence was found to support a sequence of developmental tasks for women that differed from Chickering's theory" (p. 216). More specifically, "women dealt with [Mature Interpersonal Relationship] tasks earlier and were further along in mastering and resolving these tasks than they were on the [Developing Autonomy] tasks. This constitutes a major difference from Chickering's theory" (Straub and Rodgers, 1986, p.222).

In contrast to these traditional views of college student development, the theories of Gilligan and Belenky present a female-oriented view of college student development. These theorists have taken into account the college experiences of women in the design of their respective theories. Gilligan and Belenky move beyond the traditional theories of student development with their direct study of the experiences of women. They attempt to capture the feminine voice as heard in context and shed light into women's construction of moral development.

One voice in the area of women's developmental issues is that of Belenky. Belenky et al (1986) believe that empowerment is an important issue in developing the power of the (woman's) mind. Belenky et al (1986) state "that [women] can strengthen themselves through the empowerment of others is essential wisdom often gathered by women" (p. 47). The college women in Belenky et al's study (1986) demonstrated three themes: ("Confirmation of the Self as Knower"; "Knowing the Realties: the Voice of Experience"; and "Freedom, Structure and

Tyranny of Expectation") as related to their educational experiences. The theme of "Confirmation of the Self as Knower" relates to a woman understanding or believing in her ability to grow intellectually. "For women, confirmation and community are prerequisites rather than consequences of development" (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 194).

"Knowing the Realities: The Voice of Experience" describes the type of experiences that women perceive as reality. Experiences which were personal or concept-related fostered the women's understanding of reality. Abstractions which preceded experiences were difficult for the women to understand and ground in reality. Basically, abstract concepts or views which were not part of the women's reality were difficult for them to understand. As Belenky et al (1986) state: "Even the women who were extraordinarily adept at abstract reasoning preferred to start from personal experience" (p. 201).

In terms of the theme "Freedom, Structure, and Tyranny of Expectation," all of the women Belenky et al interviewed wanted some sense of structure in their educational community. The absence of structure was thought to encourage self-indulgence and a lack of seriousness. Coupled with the need or call for structure was a perceived lack of choices. The women expressed the desire to learn to make choices and to be free to learn what they wanted, rather than be told what to learn. Colleges operating according to a model of "housewifery" (respecting the students' own rhythms rather than imposing an arbitrary timetable) complimented and supported female development (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 211).

Carol Gilligan, a noted theorist in the area of female moral development, called for an increase in developmental theories examining the concerns and experiences of women. Gilligan questioned, most notably, Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development, in terms of the way he scored female responses to moral conflicts. Gilligan (1977) stated, "this repeated finding of developmental inferiority in women may, however, have more to do with the standard by which development has been measured than with the quality of women's thinking per se" (p. 489). The criticism of Kohlberg's stage scoring did not relate to the structural differentiation of the levels, but rather to questions of stage and sequence (Gilligan, 1977).

The primary quarrel with Kohlberg's theory as related to female development pertains to the transition between stages three and four. More women than men have scored at stage three rather than stage four (Gilligan, Kohlberg, Lerner, and Belenky, 1971). This has been interpreted as signifying a lower level of moral reasoning for women. Gilligan believed women may not always think in terms of right and wrong, but rather in terms of compromise and resolution. Women tend to value the approval of others (empathy and compassion) and their social system, elements which Kohlberg's scoring system does not take into account.

Gilligan's (1977, p. 516) focus has been to illustrate the centrality of the concepts of:

> . . . responsibility and care in women's constructions of the moral domain, to indicate the close tie in women's thinking between conceptions of the self and conceptions of morality, and, finally, to argue the need for an expanded developmental theory that would include, rather than rule out from developmental consideration, the difference in the feminine voice. Such an inclusion seems essential not only for explaining the development of women, but also for understanding in both sexes the characteristics and precursors of an adult moral conception.

Generally, Gilligan (1979) believes that the theories representing the developmental life cycle have been modeled after male experiences; such models have failed to account for the experiences of women. Gilligan (1986) recognizes a dissonance between psychological theory and women's experiences, due to a lack of research in the area of female development. Her theory describes different voices for men and women. College women demonstrate a "care and responsibility voice," and a "justice voice" (as interpreted by Kohlberg's theory). In resolving moral dilemmas, the care and responsibility voice stresses the connection between self and others (Gilligan, 1972; Lyons, 1983). The justice voice emphasizes effects on self rather than on others. These effects are evaluated through rules and principles of fairness and relationships of reciprocity.

The application of Gilligan's model to student development has three basic levels. As a woman progresses, she moves "from an egocentric through a societal to a universal perspective" (Gilligan, 1977, p. 483). At the first level, "Orientation to Individual Survival," the female student is concerned about self. As the student progresses developmentally, a transition occurs and she has a stronger sense of responsibility for self and others. The second level, "Goodness as Self-

Sacrifice," is characterized by students who demonstrate a level of morality concerned with "caring for others" (Gilligan, 1977, p. 492). This is evidenced by a student sacrificing her own needs to aid a peer. It is at this stage that the "care voice" (Gilligan, 1977) emerges, seeking to "resolve the conflict between selfishness and responsibility" (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, p. 34).

"Resolution is achieved at the third level ('The Morality to Nonviolence'), when an equilibrium is found between the expectations of conformity and caring in the conventional notions of womanhood and individual needs" (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991 p. 34). "It is at this level, universal in nature, that a person or student condemns any type of exploitation and hurt" (Gilligan, 1977, p. 492).

As with all new theories and theories which dispute conventional beliefs, Gilligan's views have been challenged and criticized. Luria (1986) believes that Gilligan has oversimplified and over interpreted the data structuring her theory of "A Different Voice". Kerber (1986) echoes Luria's position and warns against the study of psychological development through a dualistic lens (male/female-separate spheres); such a view lends itself to oversimplification. It is further believed by Greeno and Maccoby (1986) that more research needs to be conducted: "A claim that the two sexes speak in different voices amounts to a claim that there are more women that men who think, feel, or behave in a given way. Simply quoting how some women feel is not enough proof" (p. 315).

In summary, traditional developmental theories have been challenged by a new group of theorists who argue that the experience of men cannot be generalized to women. Such generalizations have led to a misrepresentation of theories pertaining to student development. Due to this misrepresentation in the prominent theories of college student development, and this void in the literature, I believe there is a strong need for research examining the developmental processes and experiences of both male and female students, treating each gender distinctly and equally within the scope of general college student development.

Sottile's (1996) qualitative research of first year female college students revealed that Chickering's theory does capture many of the experiences of college females. In analyzing the

experiences of female college students, seven themes were generated: "Going Out In College," "Meeting People In College," "Residence Hall As Community," "The Impact Of College Friends," "On Your Own: The Responsibility Of Being Mature," "Learning To Be Independent" and "Academic Pressures Of College." Such themes correspond well with Chickering's first three vectors of student development. The research design stated below greatly extends the above cited research to include both male and female, first and second year college students. A comprehensive research design was developed to capture the experiences of first and second year college students using a greater number of participants in a more diverse setting. Gender was not used as a differentiating variable for fear this would further divide the research and yield discriminating comparisons.

It is hypothesized that as the semester progresses, social networks will increase outside of the academic setting. It is believed that the social networks created outside of the academic environment will foster social development but such networks, unless established by the instructor in the classroom, will not foster social networks in the classroom. It is further believed that there is a relationship between the development of social networks and the establishment of friendships outside of the classroom. As social networks increase, greater development occurs (as rated by the five parts of the survey).

Methods

Participants

The purposes of this research were to describe and to better understand the experiences of first and second year college students (18-21 years old) attending a university in a Mid-Eastern state. The participants who completed the survey lived within a 60 mile radius of the university or in the residence halls. The university caters to a rural population and has a community population of about 60,000. All of the students who completed the survey were education majors.

Instrument

A novel survey (Student Experience Survey) was created to determine the activities of college students. The 31 question survey addressed six areas of development: building friendships, community, exclusive relationships, self management, support, and academic behavior. The first half of the survey contained a four or five point response scale while the second half had yes and no responses. During the first administration of the survey, at the beginning of the semester, 101 surveys were completed by first and second year education majors, with a gender breakdown of about 65% female and 35% male students. Nine surveys were not analyzed because they did not fit the category of being a traditional first or second year college student. Approximately 70% of the surveys returned were traditional first year college students. At the end of the semester, during the second round of data collection, the demographics were similar to those stated above, except 81 surveys were returned. Fifteen surveys of the 81 delivered were not analyzed because they were incomplete or they did not fit the category of a first or second year student. The decline in the number of surveys delivered was due to a decrease in attendance in all classes.

Procedure

The first part of the survey was administered during the first week of classes in the Fall semester and the second part of the survey was administered during the last week of classes in the same semester to track changes in development. The survey was administered by a graduate assistant or by one of the researchers. Introductory education classes and core-required education classes were surveyed. These classes were chosen because they had the most first and second year students with equal classroom exposure. All the surveys were completed during the first 15 minutes of class and returned at that time.

Results

In analyzing the data set, significant correlations were found. There was a significant correlation between friends of friends and academic friends [r(90)=.155<.01] pertaining to second year students but such a correlation did not exist regarding the first year college student population. For both first year [r(90)= .263<.05] and second year [r(90)= .549<.01] college students, alcohol consumption increased as hours spent with friends of friends increased. This was also true when analyzing similarities between residence hall friends. As time spent with this peer group increased, alcohol consumption also increased. [r(90)= .341<.001]. There was a significant relationship between friends of friends and residence hall friends for first year students [r(90)= .329<.01], and there was an extremely high correlation between friends of friends and residence hall friends pertaining to second year students [r(90)= .712<.01]. A significant positive correlation [r(155)=.343<.001] was present between academic friends and friends of friends. There was also a significant correlation present between academic friends and residence hall friends [r(154)=.499<.001].

As the semester progressed there was a decrease (5%) in seeking advice from parents and hometown friends (6%) but an increase in seeking advice from residence hall friends (13%). When addressing the question of support for resolving a situation, there was a decrease in resolving situations on one's own in the first survey (83% to 76%) to relying more on one's friends for support (10% to 17%) and a decrease in parental support (7% to 3%). Students also had the tendency to remove themselves from dangerous situations (48.9% to 56.1%) more often as the semester progressed. On average, 77% of the students surveyed spent 0-5 hours a week alone. By the end of the semester a majority of students increased their contact with friends by eight hours per week. Within the first semester 66% of the students investigated at least two fields of study.

There was a significant relationship between hours spent alone and questioning a professor [r(155)=.208<.01] , and between removing oneself from a dangerous situation and managing money [r(156)=.208<.01]. A significant negative relationship [r(155)=.-261<.001] appeared

between removing oneself from a dangerous situation and giving into peer pressure, and a positive relationship existed between removing oneself from a dangerous situation [r(155)=.379<.001] and what one states in public.

Alcohol use remained constant throughout the semester with about half of the students engaging in underage drinking. Approximately 12% (first survey) to 15% (second survey) drank to get intoxicated. There was a significant positive correlation [r(155)=.355<.001] in both groups between alcohol consumption and hours spent socially with academic friends. A significant negative correlation [r(156)=.-227<.01] was noted between alcohol consumption and removing oneself from a dangerous situation. Following this same trend, there were positive correlations between alcohol consumption and hours spent socially with friends of friends [r(156)=.302<.001] and with residence hall friends [r(155)=.351<.001]. There was a significant negative correlation between alcohol consumption and appropriately managing money [r(156)=.-260<.001], and between alcohol consumption and what one states in public [r(156)=.-310<.001].

Discussion

When addressing the topic of independence (seeking advice and resolving situations), support from parents and hometown friends decreased as the semester progressed, in favor of support from residence hall friends. This indicates that as students leave home and embark upon new academic and social careers, they express their independence by seeking support from their newly formed peer groups, with whom they feel camaraderie and equity. As peer intimacy grows during the semester, so do close friendships and new social networks. Initially the social networks appear to be stronger among residence hall friends and friends of friends, than academic friends. When addressing the increase in social webbing and social networks, it was hypothesized that as students depart from home for college, and live in the residence halls, they begin meeting new friends and subsequently decrease contact with hometown friends. As stated in the results, a significant increase was noted in obtaining support from friends of friends for first year students and obtaining support from academic friends for second year students. This indicates that a new

social network solidified for first year students and expanded for second year students. The results strongly suggested that first year students did not consider their academic classmates to be friends; rather, they tended to see their residence hall peers as "friends." By the second year of college, however, the survey results indicated that academic classmates may become friends. College is still prominently a social process during the second year of college. It is an intimacy of social networks.

As independence increased so did behaviors of overt control over one's own actions. Significant correlations were noted between spending time alone and questioning authority. This indicated that as students begin to feel secure with themselves and spending time alone, they begin to voice their independence. There was a significant relationship, for second year students, between removing one's self from dangerous situations and what one states in public. This indicates that as self-assurance increases and control over what one states in public increases, so does a student's confidence.

As the semester progressed, there were correlations between academic friends, alcohol use, and an increase in social networks. Alcohol consumption seemed to be a component related to time spent with residence hall friends and friends of friends. Alcohol consumption remained consistent (regarding each college rank) as the semester progressed although approximately half of the student engaged in underage drinking. The students came to campus already engaging in illegal alcohol use. As alcohol use increased so did the lack of removing one's self from dangerous situations, controlling what one states in public, and effective money management. It is believed that alcohol use inhibits independent thinking and encourages submission to peer pressure. It is important to note that about 12% to 15% of the students surveyed drank to get intoxicated. Hill (1991) found that despite increases in the legal drinking age, between 82 and 92 percent of college students drink alcohol. Of that 82 to 92 percent, 20 percent may be considered heavy drinkers (Hill, 1991). It is imperative that every university address the issue of underage drinking. Gleason (1994), Finley and Corty (1993), Nam (1994), and Leibsohn (1994) found that alcohol use could have potentially serious effects related to college development such as lowed G.P.A., increased risk of sexual

assault upon women, and a link between choosing friends based on alcohol and drug use as determined by high school behavior. Gleason (1994) further believes that insufficient attention has been paid to the drinking behavior of college women.

This research is significant because it quantitatively supports Sottile's (1996) qualitative research related to social networks. The research undoubtedly supports the hypothesis that first and second year college students begin to rely on their residence hall peers for support and advice concerning their social environment, but not their academic environment. Accompanying this lifestyle comes a newfound independence and self-reliance, more apparent for second year student than first year, as well as new and expanded social networks. Nevertheless, with this new independence, also arrives increased peer influences and peer pressures. Alcohol consumption seemed to have many negative consequences, such as lack of impulse control, ineffective money management, and poor social judgment.

Similar to Chickering's (1993) theory, it is believed that in order for successful development to occur, a student must engage in a number of activities. It is important for a first year student to explore his or her environment with a college peer. Along with meeting new peers, it is beneficial for a student to acquire a few trusted friends. Such friendships foster a feeling of psychological and physical security. Once trusted friendships are developed, a social network or social webbing should occur in order to support a student's college activities. During the first year and a half, the majority of students begin to develop such a system in their social life but this system is absent in their academic life. To foster academic development, a similar social network should be established in a student's academic life. Academic club involvement should be strongly fostered by having academic organizations as a required component of the college experience This would involve creating close friendships in the classroom which are built on trust and a sense of community. The process of creating social and academic networks contributes to the development of an identity during the first half of college. The establishment of an identity is related to the psychosocial process of forming social networks throughout a person's life activities.

Summary

Solid social networks should be fostered in a student's social activities, and be established in a student's academic environment. Social development and peer support groups should be part of the instructional design of all first year classes. Small group interactions should be part of the instructional format of all classes to aid student development and initiate academic social networks. It is also important to note that the vast majority of the participants regularly engaged in underage drinking. Intervention programs should be established which go beyond just trying to stop students from using alcohol. Programs should be developed that educate students about appropriate alcohol use and the dangers involved when alcohol is used inappropriately. A university or college should also establish student assistance programs which address inappropriate alcohol use. Classroom size should be limited to optimize teacher - student interactions.

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